What is claimed is:

1. A system for configuring software to correspond to the physical configuration of a convertible checkout station comprising:

a physical configuration actuator; and;

a physical configuration signal generator responsive to the actuator to generate a signal identifying the physical configuration of a convertible checkout station.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the physical configuration actuator and physical configuration signal generator are reed switches mounted to surfaces brought into proximity to one another in one physical configuration of the checkout station and separated from one another in another physical configuration of the checkout station.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the physical configuration actuator is a tab mounted to a stationary surface of the checkout station and the physical configuration signal generator is a plunger switch mounted to a surface movable relative to the stationary surface.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the physical configuration actuator is a magnet mounted to a stationary surface of the checkout station and the physical configuration signal generator is a magnetic switch mounted to a surface movable relative to the stationary surface.

5. The system of claim 1 wherein the physical configuration actuator is a radiation source mounted to a stationary surface of the checkout station and the physical configuration signal generator is a radiation sensing switch mounted to a surface movable relative to the stationary surface.

6. The system terminal of claim 1 wherein the physical configuration actuator is mounted to a stationary surface of the checkout station and the physical configuration signal generator is mounted to a surface movable relative to the stationary surface.

7. The system of claim 6 wherein the stationary surface is a surface of a sliding drawer and the movable surface is a surface of a scanner that is mounted by a swivel to the sliding drawer.

8. The system of claim 6 wherein the stationary surface is a surface of a recessed compartment of the checkout station and the movable surface is a side of a sliding drawer mounted to move with reference to the recessed compartment.

9. The system of claim 6 wherein the stationary surface is a surface of a recessed compartment of the checkout station and the movable surface is one end of a scanner mounted to rotate with respect to the recessed compartment.

10. The system of claim 1 further comprising:

a processor coupled to the signal generated by the signal generator so that the processor configures software for operating the checkout station in correspondence with the physical configuration indicated by the generated signal.

11. A method for configuring software to correspond to the physical configuration of a convertible checkout station comprising:

generating a configuration signal corresponding to a checkout station physical configuration; and

determining a software configuration for the checkout station corresponding to the physical configuration indicated by the generated signal.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

loading software modules corresponding to one operational mode for the checkout station.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising:

executing the loaded software modules to operate the checkout station in the operational mode corresponding to the indicated physical configuration.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising:

interrupting the execution of the loaded software modules in response to detection of a change in the signal indicative of the physical configuration of the checkout station.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising:

loading software modules corresponding to another operational mode for the checkout station in response to the detected change in the signal indicative of the physical configuration of the checkout station.

16. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

executing the loaded software modules for the other operational mode to operate the checkout station in the other operational mode corresponding to the detected change in physical configuration of the checkout station.

17. A system for configuring software to correspond to the physical configuration of a convertible checkout station comprising:

means for generating a signal indicative of a physical configuration of a checkout station; and;

means for determining an operational mode for the checkout station from the generated signal.

18. The system of claim 17 further comprising:

means for actuating the generating means so that the generating means generates a signal indicative of a first physical configuration of the checkout station in response to the actuating means and generating means being in proximity to one another.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the generating means changes the signal in response to the actuating means being separated from the generating means.

20. The system of claim 17 wherein the signal generating means is coupled to a processor for interrupting the processor so that the processor may change software configuration for operating the checkout station in another operational mode.